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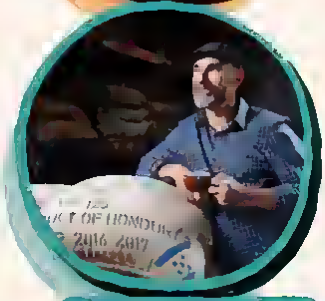

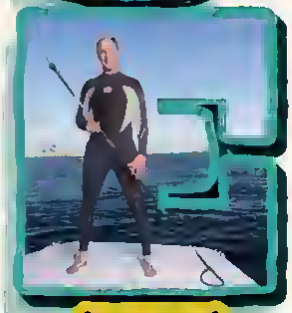

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Every spring since 2013, *OC Weekly* has taken a break from our regular routine of telling you what to eat, drink, hear and watch—not to mention exposing corruption at the highest levels of politics and law enforcement in Orange County. That break, all wrapped up in a fancy, glossy cover, is what you have in your hands right now: our annual People Issue. If you hadn't noticed, this year's package is leaner than last year's, with about a third of the profiles and 40 fewer pages. That makes this year's batch of folks the most exclusive one in our history—and it means extra care went into their selection.

Instead of going after big-name celebrities including professional surfers or hockey players, we've focused on folks who are less well-known but even more deserving of recognition, people playing fundamentally important and positive roles in their communities. And this year, we went back to the man who photographed all our profile subjects for our first People Issue: longtime *Weekly* freelancer John Gilhooley, who is a story in and of himself. (I'm not kidding: See page 58!)

A special thanks to Gilhooley for his fantastic work on this issue, as well as to all our hard-working staff who helped to compile it. And thanks to you, dear reader, for picking it up. We hope you enjoy!

— *NICK SCHOU*

PEOPLE 2018

DAVID LOPEZ 10
L. SONG RICHARDSON 12
DR. CHRIS LOWE 14
KIM VALENTINE 16
RICH MEAD 22
MARTIN DIEDRICH 24
GLENN BRUMAGE 32
AMY SANCHEZ ARTEAGA AND MISAEL DIAZ 34
ROBERT WILLIAMS 40
STACY BUTLER 42
DAVID VALDEZ 44
JONN GILHOOLEY 58

also

19 | EVENTS | Things to do while wishing you were one of our People picks
45 | CONCERT GUIDE | Compiled by Nate Jackson
47 | SAVAGE LOVE | By Dan Savage
54 | TOKE OF THE WEEK | Papa & Barkley Releaf Patch. By Mary Carreon

on the cover

Photos by John Gilhooley
Design by Richie Backman

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SANTA ANA'S SASSIEST LIBRARIAN

DAVID LOPEZ IS PUTTING HIS HOMETOWN ON THE GLOBAL MAP

BY GABRIEL SAN ROMÁN

"Everybody always asks me the same questions," David Lopez says of his profession. "It's hard to not look at me and say I'm a sexy librarian!" If the 32-year-old senior librarian at Santa Ana Public Library had to catalog every stereotype about librarians and the city he gets, it'd take the Dewey Decimal System to do it. People regularly ask Lopez if libraries are still around, if they're even needed anymore or if he's an antisocial bookworm. (Yes, yes and no!)

So what kind of librarian is Lopez really? An accomplished one. In 2014, he received a Carnegie Corporation of New York/*New York Times* "I Love My Librarian" Award. Just this year, *Library Journal* named him one of 2018's "Movers & Shakers." And he's helping to take the Santa Ana Public Library international in September as an Emerging Leaders Fellow at the Next Library Conference in Berlin. "I'm not the best librarian in the world," Lopez says. "But as a queer person of color, I need to show that we're worth it, and when I can put Santa Ana on a map, it's a big deal."

For Lopez, the Santa Ana Public Library system is sort of a family tradition. "I essentially grew up going to the library," he says. His *tía* started working there in the 1970s, retiring as a circulation supervisor when McFadden Library closed down in 2004. Lopez's sister followed at the same branch out of high school. While a Roadrunner at Saddleback High School, Lopez tried to join the library lineage by applying to be a page, but he didn't get the job.

Instead, Lopez earned a screenwriting degree from Chapman University while working retail. Along the way, his sister resigned from the Newhope branch. He interviewed for and got some hours left by her vacancy. "I never had intended to become a librarian because I was going to make it big!" he says, laughing. Lopez enrolled in UC Riverside's MFA creative-writing program and took classes with former U.S. poet laureate Juan Felipe Herrera.

After a post-graduation trip to Peru, Lopez realized he didn't have to choose between library life and his writing aspirations. "I need to be that connection for people who don't have aunts or sisters who work for the library," he reflected. Lopez began working full-time in 2014, the same year his MFA thesis *The 41* became an award winner at the Oaxaca Film Festival. When the *Santa Ana Register* briefly revived, Lopez also authored the "Life In the Golden City" column, which helped him network with local newsmakers he later brought into the library for events.

Santa Ana's library reflects a community facing different challenges than many others in the county. "We're not just a place for books," Lopez says. "We have people who come in and use Skype to talk to relatives whom they can't go see because they're undocumented." And, until recently, the main library has been across the way from the civic center's now-evicted homeless encampment. "In the past couple of years, we've done our best to reorganize ourselves," Lopez says. Policies have changed, and security guards are present. "It's about showing people in a humane way homeless people are also entitled to be here."

Santa Ana Public Library isn't "unsafe," as misguided detractors claim, two years ago, it even claimed a National Medal for Museum and Library Service during a White House ceremony. And in a few months, the library is headed to Europe. "I'm a Santa Ana resident, and I love Santa Ana," Lopez says. "It's a chance for people to understand that as a community, we're all worth something."

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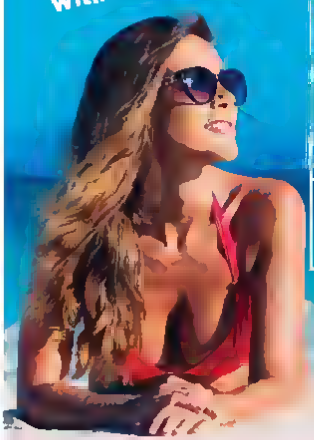

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OC PEOPLE 2018

QUEEN OF DEANS

L. SONG RICHARDSON CONTINUES TO DEFY EXPECTATIONS

BY MATT COKER

You'd be forgiven if you believed some of the sculptures filling L. Song Richardson's sprawling office on the UC Irvine campus were picked up during world travels. After all, her mother was born in Korea, where she met Richardson's father, a U.S. military officer at the time. Because of his orders, the Richardson family resided for some time in Germany. However, the unusual art pieces catching light through large south- and west-facing campus windows were actually created by Kurt Kieffer, a sculptor who was an investigator with the Orange County Public Defender's office in 2014 when he met the woman who would become his wife.

That's the same year Richardson was wooed from the University of Iowa to Irvine by UCI Law's founding dean, Erwin Chemerinsky. "I was happy where I was," she confesses from a comfy chair in her Irvine office. "I was doing amazing things. I came here because this place is special."

She goes on to cite low student-to-professor ratios and law school clinics that put undergraduates and graduate students into local communities to help solve real-world issues. "There are so many things," Richardson finally says of what makes the school special. "You can feel it. Our faculty and students will say something is 'so UCI.' It's in our DNA."

Achievement is certainly in her DNA. In July 2016, Chemerinsky promoted her to senior associate dean for Academic Affairs. The following July, after he announced he was leaving to become the UC Berkeley law school dean, Richardson was named interim dean of UCI Law; she became the permanent dean this past Jan. 1.

Yet, she originally had no intention of becoming a lawyer. She was born in El Paso, Texas, just one of the many places her African-American, Akron, Ohio-born father was sent because of his military career. Richardson's younger brothers were born in Heidelberg, Germany, before the family returned to El Paso for a bit, then moved on to the Boston area.

"I loved it," Richardson says of her family's time in the small town of Shirley, Massachusetts, which is about 50 miles outside the state capital. "There were a lot of military children in my junior high school and high school. It was an incredibly diverse environment; there were so many people of different cultures. I feel very lucky to have lived there; it was an idyllic environment."

She does not recall having been confronted with racism until she entered Harvard University. "My parents really shielded me and my two brothers," Richardson says. "It was as a college student when I really started to think more about race because other college students were focusing on my race."

A classically trained pianist since childhood, Richardson had been accepted to Juilliard. As a freshman, she won the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra's Concerto Competition but eventually realized she could get no better at playing the piano. She went on to graduate cum laude in psychology and intended to become a physician. "Being a lawyer never occurred to me," she says.

That changed after she started working with the Massachusetts Commission on Aging, for which she dug into discrimination cases. "I saw the way race was affecting lives," she says. "I knew I wanted to do work related to civil rights, related to race."

The Yale University law school graduate now focuses on race and gender as a legal scholar, and she is particularly interested in something that also ties into her psychology studies: How unconscious bias shapes policy and law.

The 10th-anniversary class of UCI Law, which opened in August 2009, will soon be welcomed to Irvine. They will have been winnowed from the largest applicant pool ever—including the inaugural class, who got free tuition.

A recent study found that only Yale, Harvard, the University of Chicago, Stanford, NYU and Columbia have better faculties when it comes to scholarly impact. Richardson's goal is for UCI Law to keep defying expectations. "We want to continue attracting innovative thinkers here," she says. "We want to continue being groundbreaking and transformative. We'll continue to rise in the rankings. We'll continue to do the impossible. That's what we are about."

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SHARK WHISPERER

EVERY WEEK IS SHARK WEEK FOR DR. CHRIS LOWE

BY SARAH AMARAL

Dr. Chris Lowe specializes in all things sharks, especially great whites. The director of Cal State Long Beach's Shark Lab—who is well-known for his appearances on National Geographic, BBC and the Discovery Channel—can tell you more about this reclusive species in one half-hour conversation than you would get in any Shark Week program or documentary on Netflix.

He grew up on Martha's Vineyard, and his family tree features a long list of whalers and commercial fishermen. "I don't remember when I learned how to fish or swim," Lowe says. "I was just constantly in the ocean."

Although hooking fish was a commonplace occurrence for young Chris, he'll never forget catching his first shark and becoming obsessed. He just wanted to learn as much as he could about the species. "Having no one in my family ever go to college, I didn't really know what to do," Lowe explains. "I kinda had to fumble my way through that process. … But I think the key for me was I kinda knew what I wanted to do, and I was determined to do it."

After earning a B.A. in marine biology at Barrington College, Lowe went on to obtain an M.S. in biology at Cal State Long Beach, where he studied under then-Shark Lab director Donald Nelson. While working on his Ph.D. in zoology from the University of Hawaii, he received word that his good friend and mentor had passed, leaving Nelson's position open. But Lowe never saw himself settling on great whites, thinking they were an insanely overrated Hollywood muse. "I swore I'd never do it," he says. But the fact that the behemoths were abundant in the waters off Long Beach, where juvenile whites learn to hunt fish in the shallows, made the decision all but inevitable. "The babies are just too cute; they really are," Lowe says. "They're amazing little animals. … Mom drops them, and they're completely on their own, and they have to figure out everything. … I began to realize how fascinating they really were and [thought about] what I could do to change people's perspectives."

Lowe recently partnered with California Assemblyman Patrick O' Donnell on Bill 2191, the White Shark Population Monitoring and Beach Safety Program, which would provide essential funding for proper tools used to study sharks. Monitoring the sharks and their increasing presence staggeringly close to popular SoCal beaches is a vital part of equipping lifeguards and public safety officials. "There's been no state or federal funding for shark research," Lowe says. "This is a really exciting opportunity because for the first time, some people are recognizing the importance for supporting this kind of work at the state level."

He and other white shark researchers aim to figure out what effects climate has on migrating patterns of the *Carcharodon carcharias*, as well as to better provide real-time data to water-safety officials. "Lifeguards can't just be swimming out there and pulling people out of the surf; they have to know more about the wildlife that are on those beaches because they're on the front lines," Lowe says. "They're dealing with the public and the ocean on a daily basis. That's where we come in. We can provide them with that information, and they in turn can provide the public with that information."

Lowe is hopeful people's perspectives will change once they learn more about the great whites. "They're gonna go from fearing them to wanting to protect them," he says.

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HELPING HEARTS

KIM VALENTINE REMEMBERS WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE HOMELESS

BY PATRICE MARSTERS

"I still look for places to sleep. Where could I go for the night? It's been so many years, and I have a home, but I still look. That never goes away."

It's been 37 years since Kim Valentine left her family. She was just 14, a straight-A ninth-grader who was on the student council. She's a bit tight-lipped as she thinks back to that time. "I was living in an abusive situation," she recalls, "and I decided leaving was a better idea than staying."

She slept in unlocked laundry rooms and empty apartments, on people's lawns and on the beach. Eventually, she was put in foster care, then a group home for unwed mothers. At 16, she was told she would now be legally emancipated. Unfamiliar with the process, Valentine left without any documents proving her new legal status. "I was given 12 days' notice," Valentine says. "I had to leave the group home. I went back to Long Beach and lived in some terrible places."

She worked what jobs she could, such as waitressing at Bob's Big Boy, while getting her GED. She joined the Marine Corps at 18 and went to school to be a paralegal. After her service ended, she earned an AA at Golden West College, then a law degree from Western State University. By then, she had three kids, had gotten married and was living a middle-class life in Orange County. Her youngest was 1 when she took the bar exam. Life was nothing like what it was when she was a teen. "I have this whole other life now," she says. Yet she would still look.

"My youngest has lived in the same house his whole life," Valentine says. "I saw these kids, all being raised in Mission Viejo, and they were just in what I call the OC bubble."

When her son was the age she was when she left home, she decided she wanted him to see a different Orange County, the side she knew existed because she once lived it. So she got together some of his friends, and they filled 50 brown bags with hygiene items and blankets. "I was working on a case in San Diego, and I knew of an encampment down there," she recalls. They loaded up the bags and the kids and just went. When they got there, she let the kids lead the way. "The homeless would feel less disrespected if they got them from the kids," she says.

Her son gave the first bag. It was a woman, she recalls. "He talked with her for a while," Valentine says. "It was surprising how impactful it was to him."

Before long, the kids had finished handing out the bags, and her son wanted to do more. Valentine ditched the paper bags and switched to backpacks. She put out the word, requesting friends collect hotel-sized products. ("[Homeless people] have to be able to carry everything," she says. "You can't give them full-sized bottles of shampoo!") Assembly took place in her garage. Their first time back, 100 backpacks were distributed. The next time, 250, and the next, 500. Operation Helping Hands was born.

All ages help now, putting together about 2,500 backpacks per year. Younger kids and other volunteers fill the bags on Saturday, then groups of high school kids deliver them directly to people. Valentine keeps still other assembled bags in her office lobby for anyone to take, keep with them and give to someone in need. Valentine knows how much these gestures can mean to a person. "People have this perception that if you're homeless, it's because you're lazy, et cetera," she says. "But that's not true. ... Sometimes, you're homeless because there are circumstances worse than living on the street."

She recalls a sign she saw at one encampment: "Don't judge us because you're only one paycheck away from being my neighbor." In a county with rising housing costs and a growing homeless population, the likelihood of that happening increases. "There is something so profound about waking up in the morning and wondering where you're going to sleep that night."

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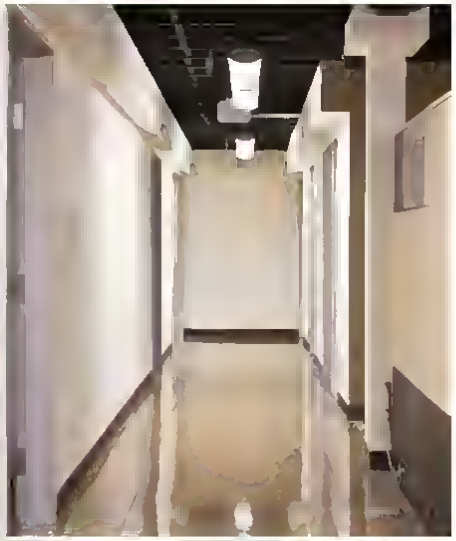

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fri/05/25

[CONCERT]

GET THE PARTY STARTED

P!nk

Ever since she became a huge star following the release of *Missundaztood* in 2001, P!nk has been one of the more forward-sounding artists in pop music. She has continued to expand her sound while retaining an accessibility that allows her to succeed and sell out arenas. *Beautiful Trauma*, released last August, saw instant success with the single "What About Us," which reached No. 1 on the Adult Pop Songs chart. If that wasn't enough, P!nk took home the coveted Michael Jackson Video Vanguard Award at the VMAs last year and has spent this year touring the largest arenas around. If nothing else, P!nk's longevity and high-wire live act—you'll know why at the show—has proven she's one of the best pop performers since the turn of the century.

P!nk at the Honda Center, 2695 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim. (714) 704-2500; www.hondacenter.com. 8 p.m. $47.45-$227.50. —WYOMING REYNOLDS

[COMEDY]

Laugh Along

Felipe Esparza

Writer, actor, comedian and winning alum of the long-running *Last Comic Standing* reality competition, Felipe Esparza is incredibly forthcoming about his troubled early life in his standup sets, as well as in his biography. Born in Sinaloa, Mexico, Esparza and his family moved to Boyle Heights, where he developed substance-abuse problems and became a teenage father. Nevertheless, the shaggy-haired funnyman pursued comedy as a space to tell stories of his drug-addled, unbelievable life. With multiple Netflix specials, a popular comedy podcast and a sitcom on the way, Esparza's current tour allows him to share his humorously told anecdotes in an intimate setting.

Felipe Esparza at Irvine Improv, 527 Spectrum Center Dr., Irvine, (949) 854-5455, irvine.improv.com. 7:30 & 9:45 p.m.; also Sat.-Sun. $30. 18+. —AIMEE MURILLO

MORE » ONLINE
OCWEEKLY.COM

sat/05/26

[FESTIVALS]

SEEING RED

Strawberry Festival

Celebrate the Strawberry Festival's landmark 60th year with a traditional medley of games, family-friendly activities, carnival rides, pageants, performances and even a 5K. The annual event honoring the juicy, sweet fruit runs all weekend and into Monday, but today's the day when the popular festival parade takes place. This year's celeb Grand Marshall is Mickey Mouse, but the Theme Grand Marshall is longtime volunteer Jack Wallin, while *A.P. Bio* star Aparna Brielle, *This Is Us* stars Parker Bates and Mackenzie Hancsicsak, and other television names are set to appear. Bring the kiddos and other berry-obsessed friends down to this all-day rager, where the streets will run red with more berries than you can imagine!

Strawberry Festival at Village Green between Euclid and Main Street, Garden Grove; strawberryfestival.org. 10 a.m.; also Sun.-Mon. Free. —AIMEE MURILLO

[CONCERT]

Ready to Rock

The Blasters

Few voices are more immediately recognizable and, yes, comforting than the wailing tenor of the Blasters' front man/guitarist Phil Alvin, whose bandmates—Bill Bateman (drums), John Bazz (bass) and Keith Wyatt (guitar)—back him on original rockabilly and blues-rock classics that are now as treasured as the songs they play by their mentors, Howlin' Wolf, Willie Dixon and Bill Haley. The group will blast through "American Music," "Marie Marie" and "Border Radio" at a new Long Beach venue hosting their annual Memorial Day Weekend show, as their usual home, Don the Beachcomber, was shuttered. Maybe the Blasters will dedicate their performance to a club that's gone—but, we hope, coming back.

MORE » ONLINE
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The Blasters with Petunia and the Vipers at At the Top, 201 Pine Ave., Long Beach, (714) 809-6146, www.donthebeachcomber.com. 6:30 p.m. $25-$75. —ANDREW TONKOVICH

sun/05/27

[BURLESQUE]

Hope You're Hungry

Sweet and Savory Burlesque Brunch

It is said that music is good for the digestion. If that's the case, then music combined with a little titillating visual stimulation should be even better! Enthusiastic epicurians aged 21 and older can take advantage of the sensual dining experience on this and every Sunday at the Sweet and Savory Burlesque Brunch. For the price of admission, guests at the Federal Underground in Long Beach receive a brunch entrée, bottomless mimosas, and live burlesque entertainment, featuring the alternative Americana stylings of host singer/dancer Jessie Payo. Here's to a healthy dining experience!

Sweet and Savory Burlesque Brunch at the Federal Underground, 102 Pine Ave., Long Beach, (562) 435-2000, www.federal-underground.com. Noon. $35 21+ —SCOTT FEINBLATT

[THEATER]

Tale of Two Hermits

Grey Gardens

Forty-plus years after the world's introduction to Edith "Big Edie" Bouvier Beale and Edith "Little Edie" Bouvier Beale via Albert and David Maysles' 1975 documentary *Grey Gardens*, the eccentric and lively aunt and niece to Jackie Kennedy Onassis still have a strong following of devoted, sympathetic fans. Perhaps the most appropriate tribute to the Edies is the musical-theater adaptation of their lives, which tracks their progression from popular, wealthy socialites to isolated dwellers of their dilapidated, sprawling mansion, Grey Gardens. Mixing imagined, situational drama with real dialogue adapted from the Maysles' doc, this production provides a captivating portrait of these misunderstood, tragic figures.

Grey Gardens at Vanguard University Lyceum Theater, 55 Fair Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 668-6145, vanguard.universitytickets.com. 2 p.m. Through June 10. $15-$19 —AIMEE MURILLO

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mon/05/28

[FILM]

Bloody Good Time

A Very *Carrie* Prom

Nothing screams unforgettable like an evening with our favorite pig-blood-soaked, psychokinetic, high-school punching bag, Carrie White—and the Frida's pulling out all the stops. Featuring a screening of Brian De Palma's 1976 Oscar-nominated adaptation of Stephen King's first novel, A Very *Carrie* Prom is going full-on '70s with spiked punch, classic slow dances, toilet paper décor, and, of course, the crowning of the prom king and queen. So, don your frizzy Sue Snell wig or flip your platinum Chris Hargensen wings and dance the night away in your high-waisted polyester pants. Just be sure to have your mom pick you up before the entire class is incinerated.

A Very *Carrie* Prom at the Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, (714) 285-9422, thefridacinema.org. 8 p.m. $7-$10 —SR DAVIES

tue/05/29

[HEALTH & FITNESS]

Let's Ride

Over the Hump Mountain Bike Ride

Every Tuesday through August, competitive and casual mountain-bike riders can register for the Over the Hump Mountain Bike race series. Bicyclists will meet in Silverado Canyon and compete in a manageable, marked course—no gaping pitfalls or steep slopes to scare you. Adults and children are eligible to race on their respective courses, and afterward, a big party celebrates everyone for finishing. No e-bikes or electronics allowed, though—just you, your bike and the big, beautiful open road.

Over the Hump Mountain Bike Ride at Oak Canyon Park at Irvine Lake, 5305 Santiago Canyon Rd., Silverado, raceoc.com. 6 p.m. Through Aug. 21. Adults, $30; children, $10 —AIMEE MURILLO

wed/05/30

[CONCERT]

STILL ROCK & ROLL

Styx and Joan Jett & the Blackhearts

Rock legends Styx and Joan Jett & the Blackhearts are embarking on an extensive North American tour, starting with tonight's show at Five Point Amphitheatre in Irvine. If there's any doubt as to whether either group still have what it takes to bring an impressive show, consider that former Runaways front woman Jett and her band's last album, *Unvarnished*, released in 2013, includes collaborations with Foo Fighters front man Dave Grohl and Against Me!'s Laura Jane Grace. Styx released *The Mission* in 2017, continuing their prog-rock-heavy sound. Metal band Tesla opens the show, making this one riff-heavy storm to enjoy.

Styx, Joan Jett & the Blackhearts and Tesla at Five Point Amphitheatre, 14800 Chinon Ave., Irvine, www.fivepointamphitheatre.com. 7 p.m. $35-$360. —AIMEE MURILLO

[ART]

Making Art Move

Art in Context: Alexander Calder

The first of three lectures on 20th-century American sculptors begins with the enduringly improbable if defining subject of artist/genius Alexander Calder, born into an artistic family. The child and grandchild of sculptors, his work is among the most recognizable of the recent century: a whimsical, provocative constructor of the improbable in colorful mobiles. He only further guaranteed his own artistic context by creating floating, bouncing kinetic sculpture so consistently delightful and engaging that kids and adults linger to view and just be near them. Art historian Annalee Andres elaborates on Calder and his kin.

Art in Context: Alexander Calder at Bowers Museum's Norma Kershaw Auditorium, 2002 N. Main St., Santa Ana, (714) 567-3677, www.bowers.org. 11 a.m. $12. —ANDREW TONKOVICH

thu/05/31

[ART]

Simply Haunting

'Ghost Stories and Fairy Tales'

DEAN DRobot

Mississippi artist Geoff Mitchell is a storyteller first and foremost, dedicated to bringing to material life the deep and mysterious narratives that at some level make humans truly human. And his new "Ghost Stories and Fairy Tales" exhibit explores the thin line between the two—maybe even the thinner line between what we think of as stories and what we think of as reality—with an arsenal of paintings, a pair of short films, an event-specific ambient soundtrack and, of course, Mitchell's noted seventh-scale miniature dioramas, which serve as stages for the stories he hopes to tell. Think of it as a mix between a waking dream, a campfire tale and those oddly affecting stop-motion Harryhausen fantasy films that set the stage for the eye-grinding CGI of today. It's a different and older kind of magic, and it might be more powerful for it.

"Ghost Stories and Fairy Tales: A Ceremony of Make Believe" at Muzeo, 241 S. Anaheim Blvd., Anaheim, (714) 956-8936, muzeo.org. 10 a.m. Through July 15. $7-$10. —CHRIS ZIEGLER

[HEALTH & FITNESS]

Hit the Road

Pub Run

You're not going to find a more enticing offer to do exercise than the weekly Pub Run at Bootlegger's Brewery, a running series hosted by A Snail's Pace Running Shop that returns just in time to get your summer bodies ready (and if your ideal summer bod includes a beer belly, then here's where to start!). Just sign up at Bootlegger's, then partake in the 3-mile run/walk, which follows a low-impact course fit for runners, walkers, joggers—all manner of movers of all skill or energy levels. The first 50 people who sign up are promised a free beer immediately after the run and a commemorative pint glass, too!

Pub Run at Bootlegger's Brewery, 130 S. Highland Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-2337, www.bootleggersbrewery.com. 6 p.m. Free. —AIMEE MURILLO

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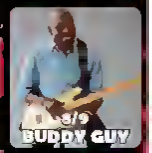

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FARM-TO-TABLE PIONEER

RICH MEAD LEADS BY EXAMPLE

BY CYNTHIA REBOLLEDO

Early every Wednesday, chef Rich Mead's day begins with a trip to the Santa Monica Farmers' Market, where he has cultivated long-lasting relationships with the growers to create a menu around freshly harvested ingredients for his restaurant, Farmhouse at Roger's Gardens.

It's all part of his guiding principles, a blend of two philosophies: fresh and sustainable.

For more than two decades, Mead has been a pioneer and advocate in working directly with local farmers, ranchers and producers to advance the burgeoning farm-to-table movement here in Orange County.

Prior to embarking on a career in the culinary world, the Washington, D.C., native got his education in economics. Mead would become a paper-pusher for the IRS before realizing the cubicle life wasn't for him. "In junior high, my parents had a friend that was the attorney for the Washington, D.C., Restaurant Association," Mead says. "He would get me jobs in the summer, and they were always in the kitchen and usually washing dishes." That turned out to have had a huge impact on his life and career.

Using his background in economics and business to link the front with the back of the house, he began his foray into the restaurant business at Stanley's. That would lead to 17th Street Cafe in Santa Monica, where he developed his first direct relationship with a purveyor. "For years, I'd take random deliveries at the back of the restaurant," Mead says. "A box of baby lettuce, wild mushrooms, whatever it was. The answer was always 'yes'—for me, it was about being creative."

Today, Farmhouse is a neighborhood eatery that's so popular it has turned into a culinary destination—and for good reason. Mead's cuisine is fantastic. Inspiration comes from the foods themselves, with local ingredients used to make comforting and delicious dishes of both technique and subtlety.

The restaurant and garden coexist in a way that is not only visually appealing, but also inspirational. The beautiful terrace overlooking Roger's Gardens' scenic greenery allows the field-to-fork experience to come to full fruition.

Despite his hard-won lessons with past restaurants closing, Mead's passion and persistence never lost momentum. His commitment to raising awareness about the connections between agricultural production and fresh-tasting food has remained instrumental in bringing chefs and farmers together to create a dialogue. "My friend and fellow farm dinner participant Paddy Glennon of Superior Seafood formed a group called the Culinary Liberation Front. It's a loosely organized group of chefs that we put together to allow chefs a chance to gather and share information, maybe a meal, maybe a beer and unwind," he says. "This was a chance to discuss sustainability, suppliers and farmers' markets. A way for everyone to grow and hopefully impact the dining scene in Orange County in a positive way."

Mead hopes more chefs will follow the path of such thoughtful leaders as chef Carlos Salgado of Taco María and Haven's chef Greg Daniels who use their platforms to support organic farmers and the movement toward a more resilient and sustainable food system. "As a chef, you're in a position where people will listen to you," he explains.

Sitting in the shade of the gazebo, Mead looks at his staff as they prepare to open. "The excitement of this restaurant is coming in and learning something all the time," he says. "The hard part here is turning tables because everyone wants to stay forever. You can't beat this environment; the experience here is really unique."

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ORANGE COUNTY'S ORIGINAL COFFEE MAN

MARTIN DIEDRICH MOVES HIS FAMILY'S JAVA LEGACY FORWARD

BY MARY CARREON

Tucked in a nook on the western side of Costa Mesa is Martin Diedrich's wholesale coffee roastery, the place where all Kéan Coffee's beans are roasted prior to being sold in grocery stores and other retailers. If you close your eyes and inhale through your nose, it smells as if you're swimming in a cup of Joe. Lifetime-achievement awards, articles and photos of Diedrich's family are mounted on the olive-green walls near the entrance. In the lounge area, a magnificent vintage coffee roaster sits in the left-side corner of the room, the name "Diedrich" written in its center. The roaster was handcrafted in 1969 by Diedrich's father, a World War II German army veteran and engineer, while they lived on a coffee farm in Guatemala.

"Right here in this facility, we roast well more than 400 million pounds of

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

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Continued
» FROM PAGE 24

coffee a year," says Diedrich, "and that's just for our wholesale business. We also roast beans in all our coffeehouses, which is the coffee that goes to the customer. So what we do in those locations is separate from all of [the wholesale] roasting. Every day and every minute of every day, our focus is making sure that we deliver the goods in the cup. Nothing else matters."

Diedrich comes from a long line of coffee connoisseurs. In 1916, his German grandmother inherited a coffee farm in Costa Rica, where she and her family worked. The land was seized during World War II, causing her to lose everything. In the '60s, she went to live with her son and his wife in Simi Valley to help raise young Martin and his brothers, she soon convinced the family to go to Costa Rica to get back her farm. Though the Diedrich family caravanned from the valley to Costa Rica, they were unable to re-acquire the lost land. Resourceful and connected, however, grandma Diedrich linked with a German family in Guatemala who knew of farmland they could buy. So the Diedrich family traveled from Costa Rica to Guatemala, where they lived and worked on their new land.

"My father was the coffee grower on our tiny farm," Diedrich recalls as he sips a cup of black coffee he sourced from Ethiopia. "It was a very hand-to-mouth existence. My brothers and I all had to work on the farm, and it was a ton of hard work. A farmer's day begins before the sun comes up, and you're in the fields working as soon as there's enough daylight to see what you're doing. You're out there doing hard physical work all day until it's too dark to see anything."

In 1982, at the height of the country's vicious civil war between the army and paramilitary death squads on the right and an array of leftist guerrilla groups, a band of what Diedrich describes as Guatemalan "thugs" took over the family coffee farm, threatening their lives if they didn't leave. Diedrich explains the same thing happened to another German family in the area nine months prior, but they didn't comply. "They thought, 'We don't get involved in their business, they won't get involved in ours.' That family disappeared. Nobody ever saw them again—not in Guatemala, not in Germany or anywhere else."

Diedrich's parents lost everything except their Volkswagen bus, the coffee roaster and their $500 nest egg. Leaving their three kids in Guatemala, they traveled back to California and found a 300-square-foot house in Corona Del Mar for the family.

But it was in that small house that Diedrich would embark upon his first successful coffee venture.

Diedrich opened the first Diedrich Coffee prototype in the Hi-Time Wine Cellars center in 1984. Two years later, he established his first, full-blown Diedrich Coffee shop on 17th Street in Costa Mesa (Nekter Juice currently occupies the spot). From there, he opened another Diedrich location on Bristol and Jamboree, which became a trendy spot people went to be seen.

Because of his exposure to the world of java, Diedrich understood the power of the coffeehouse. They were places of human interaction and intellectual connection—something America hadn't quite caught on to yet, particularly in Orange County. OC's first real coffeehouse thrived—even after Starbucks arrived.

In 1992, Diedrich sold 45 percent of his company to a private-equity investor for $1 million, which was essentially the beginning of the end of his involvement in Diedrich Coffee. At 4:45 p.m. on June 30, 2004, the CEO of the company Diedrich founded fired him. "He told me that I could work as a coffeehouse manager," recalls Diedrich. "But I said no. There was obviously no way I could do that."

Diedrich never saw a penny from the success of Diedrich Coffee, which continues to operate today. But on Dec. 26, 2005, he and his wife, Karen, opened Kéan Coffee (named after their son) in Newport Beach. Diedrich says this business will forever be a small, family-run operation. "They screwed me out of my own name," he says. "But Kean is about the future and doing what we know best: making coffee a culinary art and providing the best service to our community. What we're doing now is far superior to what we were doing at Diedrich."

Aside from serving coffee that tastes just as phenomenal cold as it does hot, Martin and Karen are involved in all kinds of environmental and socially sustainable endeavors. They minimize power usage, resources and water as much as possible, and they take responsibility for their waste. They even haul the cardboard used at Kéan over to the Orange Coast College Recycling Center after work every day. They're adamant about educating people on the environmental dangers of single-use plastics, such as straws, K-cups, coffee lids and coffee-lid stoppers. They make coffee grounds available for people to use in their gardens. And they only use local products in Kéan Coffee locations, working with other family businesses as much as possible.

"We apply our life's values to our business because this business is our life," says Diedrich. "If we had one set of values for our life and another for business, there would never be harmony for us personally or our business. It would never align. But as a result, Kéan Coffee gives my life meaningful purpose because we are serving our community with our gifts, and you can't replace that. We will thus have a place in our community forever."

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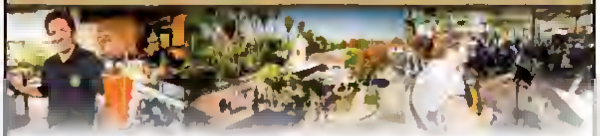
TREVOR'S AT THE TRACKS



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Meat You There!

Five new burger options in Orange County

BY ANNE MARIE PANORINGAN

Last week, we were all about the fries. This time around, it's a burger society. Build all the poke joints you want; burgers are gonna stand the test of time.

COURTESY OF GROUND HOUSE BURGER

BRAIZEN SEXY SANDWICHES
These days, sandwich shops are getting on the hand-wagon and adding meat-and-bun creations to their menus. Served with Kettle Chips (or upgrade to fries for a couple of bucks), the beauts here include tasty toppings such as shoyu mayo, pimento cheese and tahini yogurt sauce. Folks who are cutting down on bread are welcome to sub in greens. *31 E. MacArthur Crescent, Ste. 102, Santa Ana, (657) 900-2040, braizensandwiches.com.*

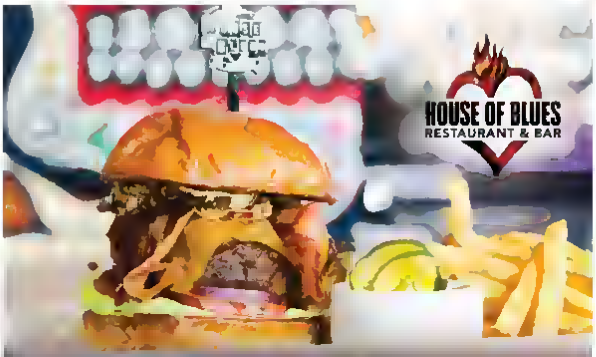
BURGERIM
Completely customize your cravings at this growing chain (coming soon to Orange!). LTO (lettuce, tomato, onion) are standard and rest on the bottom bun. All your other choices are piled above the 2.8-ounce patty of your liking. With upward of five beef options, we do appreciate the alternative proteins: falafel, salmon, turkey, etc. Over on the toppings side, we're going with a triple threat of bacon, avocado and fried egg—although the grilled onions and blue cheese are making us want to get a trio of bites. *26741 Aliso Creek Rd., Ste. E, Aliso Viejo, (949) 600-8555, www.burgerim.com.*

GRAZE HANDCRAFTED BURGERS
A new wave of Instagram-worthy meals has reached food halls. Don't be fooled by Graze's seemingly simple menu—there's flavor packed into each patty thanks to a blend of brisket, chuck and short rib. Saucy moods are welcome, as proven by the Smokey and its bourbon barbecue sauce. Tequila aioli finishes an Agave Burger. And don't forget those black garlic fries! *201 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, (949) 735-2389, www.grazehandcraftedburgers.com.*

GROUND HOUSE
Replacing Pig Pen Delicacy at Irvine's TRADE, Ground House found the hall's underserved niche. Serving up a handful of options, including the Pinoy Burger, which we wrote about in March. If you love Texas toast, then dive into the Lone Star, with its beer-battered onion rings and jalapeños. Grab extra napkins … things may get messy. *2222 Michelson Dr., Irvine.*

THE PARKWAY AMERICAN GRILL
South County gets some love with a full-service grill spot—the only one on our list! Steak fries accompany all hand-crafted, half-pound burger orders. Try a bacon-y Black and Blue, or get your fix with the Californian, stacked with mushrooms and avocado. Daring diners should bite into an El Diablo. *22411 Antonio Pkwy., Rancho Santa Margarita, (949) 713-9984, parkwayamericangrill.com.*

HONORABLE MENTION SESSIONS WEST COAST DELI
Now on its third location in the Woodbridge community of Irvine, Sessions takes a break from the beach to establish roots closer to its upbringing. With more than a dozen sandwiches on the menu, it recently added a savory mix of apps and burgers. Chow on the Perfect Burger, featuring pepper jack cheese and X special sauce. Round it out with a side of Shaka Spuds. *414 Pacific Coast Hwy., Huntington Beach, (714) 594-3899, also at 2825 Newport Blvd., Newport Beach, (949) 220-9001, and 4500-4820 Barranca Pkwy., Irvine, (949) 333-3949, www.sessionswcd.com.*



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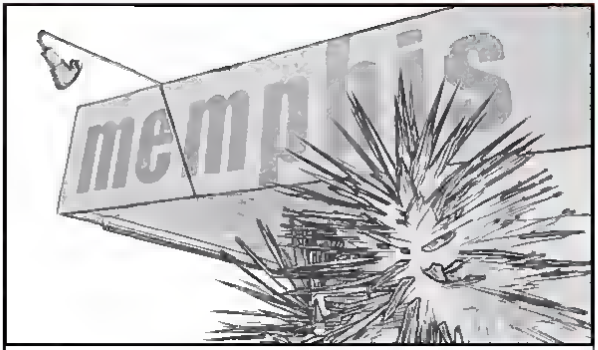

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AMBASSADOR OF SURF

GLENN BRUMAGE SPREADS THE STOKE

BY LISA BLACK

Long before Glenn Brumage began serving on Surfing Heritage and Culture Center's (SHACC) board in 2014, he had been fulfilling its vision to "spread the stoke" of surfing with the world. As of January, he became the San Clemente nonprofit's executive director and gets to focus full-time on its mission of sharing the sport's history and influence. "What drives me and gets me up every morning is that I'm literally working deep in the culture that I have loved since I was a kid," he says.

Brumage grew up in Capo Beach, the son of a Laguna Beach police officer and a nurse. "It was very easy to walk down the stone steps to Beach Road or through the hole in the fence at Capo Beach park [to the water], bodysurfing, belly boarding, knee boarding, and then I kind of graduated my way up to surfing," he recalls. "It was old-school self-taught—go paddle in and get whomped a number of times."

Though he had his days of surfing Baja with scorpions in his sleeping bag, Brumage parlayed his love of board sports into a successful career as an action-sports executive. All the while, he surfed and effortlessly collected lifelong friends. One of his buddies from their days working at Hobie in the '80s invited him to a summit in Hongzhou, China, in 2007. "Their ultimate goal was to attract the Quiksilvers and Billabongs to help them develop the surf industry," says the level-2 surf judge. "But they had no customers. As the sales and marketing director for a skateboard company, I can't come and sell products if there's no one to sell it to."

To generate interest, the group arranged surf demos, which morphed into the Silver Dragon pro event each fall.

The contest takes place on a bizarre wave. Hongzhou sits on a bay where a large river meets the sea. About 60 times per year, the incoming tide is so fierce it reverses the river's flow and forms a wave you can ride inland for 9 miles. "It's actually quite dangerous," said Brumage, who has surfed most of China's coast. "There are piers and bridges. During the tidal bore, they don't allow anyone on the river; all the commerce goes into side channels, and they lock the doors. It's pretty extreme."

The San Onofre Surf club member has surfed Tavarua, "which, as a goofy foot, is almost mecca," thanks to a 50th-birthday present from his wife, Laurie. On a trip to Ireland to pursue Laurie's passion for riding horses, they encountered a drizzly, overhead break. An hour later at the closest surf shop, they discovered the only rentals were dangerously inadequate soft boards. "That was my shot at surfing in Ireland," he recalls. "Fully denied."

What's not to be denied is his passion for leading SHACC. The place is abuzz with a new website launch and intensified social-media presence, and among a slew of other pojects, the permanent timeline exhibit is being re-imagined to include surf music with the help of Randy Nauert of the Challengers. As Brumage describes the Fender Showman amp's ability to make a four-piece band fill the old ballrooms of Newport and Huntington beaches, he's lit with curiosity.

But his deepest goal is aimed at kids. "They just don't have all the links that go back," he says. Each generation grows up idolizing the surfer who inspired them. But who inspired the idol? And the idol's idol? "If those all connected, then you'd have appreciation from one end to the other of what the sport is, then you can go further back to the origins, people riding waves in the Hawaiian culture. All those things are a big part of what SHACC is."

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OC PEOPLE 2018

ART THROUGH RESEARCH

AMY SANCHEZ ARTEAGA AND MISAEL DIAZ ARE THE COG•NATE COLLECTIVE

BY AIMEE MURILLO

As artists in residence at Grand Central Art Center (GCAC) for four years, Amy Sanchez Arteaga and Misael Diaz (a.k.a. the Cog•nate Collective) have established a presence beyond the gallery through a series of public interventions in Santa Ana, Tijuana, Los Angeles and Mexicali. The two have focused their practice on sparking dialogue on issues directly tied to the U.S.-Mexican border and how its increased militarization has affected migration, as well as how it shapes the idea of citizenship.

The word *artists* in their title is meant loosely. Instead of creating paintings or photographs, Sanchez Arteaga and Diaz use research as their medium, which they obtain by organizing all-ages art workshops, interviewing Santa Ana's downtown street vendors and merchants, and collecting oral histories. Through engaging with vulnerable immigrant communities throughout Southern California and Mexico, they've been able to translate topics that call attention to their plight into out-of-the-box, attention-grabbing public art projects. Some recent examples of their work include fitting a small trailer they called the Mobile Institute of Citizenship and Art (MICA) to play videos discussing marketplaces along the border; working with Cal State Fullerton students to hold workshops at the Santa Fe Springs swap meet; designing a set of protest balloons that read "American Citizen" in English and Spanish to give away to immigrants so they could feel more included; or enlisting Santa Ana collective Chulita Vinyl Club to broadcast DJ sets on pirate radio while cruising through the city. "That's our trajectory: following things as they come and responding to them in ways that are more research-oriented and sometimes in ways that are more artistic," Diaz says.

Though he was born in Los Angeles, Diaz was raised in Tijuana, but he traveled back and forth to San Diego for school during his youth. Sanchez Arteaga grew up in Imperial Valley, but she bounced across the border often to see family in Mexicali. They met while working for a campus magazine during their undergraduate studies at UCLA, then moved to San Diego, where they initially noticed how much more militarized the border had become, which spurred them to start investigating its effects on bordertown dwellers.

They take their name from the word *cognate*, which means multiple linguistic variations of the same word, while calling themselves a *collective*, since their projects often channel the collaborative energies of local immigrant communities, as well as other artists. Drawing from their background in research through their respective studies, the duo found themselves more interested in presenting their field notes in ways that were more accessible to the people they were studying and to "engage in conversation and ongoing dialogue that could potentially lead not to paper, but to something useful that people could use in that space," Diaz says.

Their work led them to being invited to exhibit at GCAC by former Cal State Fullerton grad students Martha L. Rocha and Emily Tyler, and GCAC director John Spiak eventually offered them an artists-in-residence spot. They've since dissected local gentrification and the subject of market spaces—or, more specifically, swap meets—where immigrants feel a sense of familiarity and home. Their latest exhibition, "Regionalia," showcases the research-art projects they've worked on in the past four years, with swap meets as the prevailing theme. And in this age of increased deportation of undocumented families, rising anti-immigrant sentiment and talks of President Donald Trump's border wall, Sanchez Arteaga and Diaz continue to try to help provide a means of resistance and showcase compassion toward their community.

"All of that hostility is real," Sanchez Arteaga says. "So I deeply hope there is also space for joy and healing and resistance that can fuel people and rejuvenate them and [help them] feel strong so they can move through their daily lives in ways that continue to empower their communities."

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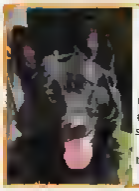

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Featured This Week

farmhousecocktails Peychauds, rosemary/thyme tincture, Jardesca, lemon, honey and gin. Plus all of the other shizz I didn't want to list.

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Fortunately, the Coast Community College District's three colleges—Coastline Community College, Golden West College, and Orange Coast College have robust career technical education (CTE) programs, which create a local labor market competent in high-demand careers to benefit the local economy. Coastline Community College (CCC) works to provide students with modern skills needed to succeed for life: technical skills, academic skills, and employability skills. Their CTE programs are aligned with rigorous industry and academic standards. CCC is dedicated to providing programs that meet the demands of the new economy and latest industries. At CCC, students receive a solid foundation in academics, but also hands-on, technical experience and know-how.

Golden West College (GWC) offers pathways in fields that require specialized training, certification, or state licensing. Many of their programs lead to an Associate in Arts Degree with courses that transfer to four-year universities. One example is the Automotive Technology department that was approved to deliver the full HONDA Professional Auto Career Training (PACT) curriculum. GWC is the only institution in the region approved to offer the Honda PACT program. GWC students will obtain state-of-the-art automotive technician training, enabling students to become Honda & Acura certified technicians.

While in the Honda PACT program, students are required to work at a Honda or Acura dealership for approximately 640 hours, applying and refining their skills. Upon completion of the two-year program, students will earn two GWC automotive certificates and become certified Honda & Acura technicians. The certificate program will be available in Fall 2018. Students are not required to be in the associate's degree program to participate in the Honda PACT certificate program.

Orange Coast College (OCC) is proud to offer more than 55 robust and exciting CTE programs that give students the education, technical training, and work-based learning experiences they need to qualify for and excel in the well-paying career of their choice in two years or less. Career and Technical Education programs prepare students for careers in high-demand fields such as Aviation Science, Accounting, Computer Programming, Network Security, Real Estate, Digital Media, and more. OCC's career courses are both professional and high tech, and are fully accredited. CTE courses take place in state-of-the-art facilities equipped with industry-standard equipment and technology. Many programs offer training that lead to industry certification and licensure

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HAVE LOVE, WILL TRAVEL

ROBERT WILLIAMS LIVES THE DREAM AS BIG SANDY

BY TAYLOR HAMBY

"I never imagined in a million years where the music would take me to or the places it did," confides Robert Williams, dressed to the nines in a crisp, black, 1950s suit with a subtly rainbow-flecked vintage shirt he picked up from Elsewhere Vintage in the Orange Circle. His hair is neatly combed and slicked-back, and the sharp lines of his attire and hairdo contrast with his soft face and gentle smile. "But man, what a ride."

We're tucked into the far-right corner booth of the Fling, the legendary old-school lounge, not unlike how the dive bar itself is tucked into the far corner of a blue-collar strip mall in a working-class neighborhood of Santa Ana. A few shots of Patron tequila in, and Williams is getting sentimental. He can't help it—he was practically born nostalgic. And he's a romantic at heart. As much as hopeless romantics are compelled to put on a good show, it always comes back to matters of the heart in the end.

"The band has been my romance," Williams confides. "And it's cost me a few romances, too."

It's a fact of life for many a career musician that tugs on the heartstrings like the bittersweet twang you get from pluckin' on the strings of a Silvertone lap steel. It's a hell of a realization, but damn if it isn't the fuel behind the fire of just about every perfect song written.

This isn't a new idea to Williams. He wrote his own perfect song exploring this idea some 20 years ago for his band, Big Sandy & His Fly-Rite Boys. "But now that song means more than ever to me,"

be says, punctuating the sentiment with a hand to his chest.

"What a Dream It's Been" is a duet, sung between Williams' alter-ego Big Sandy and a young lady. What sounds like two lovers talking through the hills and valleys of the long, winding road of love, Williams confides, is actually an ode to his now three decades living the larger-than-life persona of a rockabilly icon and open-road troubadour. It's a role that has brought Williams far from the modest apartment complexes in Fullerton he grew up in to the stages of the Grand Ole Opry, late-night television, and opening slots for legends such as Johnny Cash and Morrissey.

The young dreamer grew up primarily in Anaheim, raised at the crossroads of the sentimental romance of doo-wop—influenced by his mother's passion for the genre—and the steady beat of old western swingers such as Bob Wills, a penchant inherited from his father. "While my other friends were out in the streets, playing baseball or riding their bikes around, I would sit in my room for hours and hours listening to old records," Williams recalls. "I grew up listening to all these older records and just living in kind of a dream world."

The bridge from that dreamland to the real world first opened for the teenage Williams at the influence of his parents. They'd take their children to see James Intveld, an early rockabilly-revival pioneer who'd play at Elks Lodges and Dutch Chibs around the county in the 1980s. At the time (and even still today), women would scream and fawn over the dreamy Intveld. "I couldn't help but take notice of that," Williams says playfully.

"To me, before I saw him, I thought that it was just this make-believe world from yesteryear," Williams recalls. "He made it real and now. And that's when I started thinking, 'Well, man, I would like to try doing what he's doing.'"

When Williams was 15 or maybe 17—he isn't sure exactly—he started taking guitar lessons. "I have my mother to thank for that," he says. "She saw an ad in the *PennySaver*." His mother saw the passion simmering in her son and bought a package deal she found in an ad. Buy six lessons upfront and get a free guitar.

"I was nervous," Williams recalls. "Up until this point, it was just dreams. But this was the time to get serious." The axe that started it all was "just the cheapest guitar you could think of," he says. "But for me, I loved it."

"When I was a younger kid, listening to records, I would always visualize myself being the guy onstage singing to the crowd," Williams says. "Suddenly, I had a guitar, and it's like, 'Wait a minute, maybe I can really do this.'"

After taking a few lessons and writing a few songs of his own, Williams hooked up with a group of young high school musicians. The Moon Dogs' raw energy had wowed him at a house show in Fullerton, and he had won them over with his rendition of Elvis' rendition of "That's All Right (Mama)."

"I had been to shows before, but [what] I got to see firsthand was these young kids playing music, and to see all these young teenagers responding to it and interacting with them. [I thought to myself] 'I want this more than ever.'"

What started as one rehearsal and a song or two quickly turned into Williams and the Moon Dogs doin' the mess-around on the regular. "I was doing more songs than the guy who was already singing in the band." That didn't sit well with the group's actual lead singer, "so I got the boot from that band," Williams says. "But I had the taste."

That taste became a hunger. "I didn't know it would be a career, but I knew I wanted to do more of it," Williams says. "It was only later that it ended up taking over my life and becoming everything."

So he set out on his own and started his own projects, various incarnations of the tried-and-true rock & roll band-name formula of the singer's name and the [fill in the blanks]. Robert Williams and the Rustin' Strings, Robert Williams and the Cyclones. "I didn't want to use my own name," he explains. "Robert Williams doesn't sound like a rock & roll name."

At the time, he often wore an old jacket, a zip-up job that had belonged to his uncle Santiago, who at one time had worked as a mechanic's assistant in an auto garage. His nickname was actually Santi, but the name patch had an anglicized misspelling and instead read "Sandy."

"He would come out to shows, [and] just the mention of the name, he would well up and start to cry 'cause he was the original Big Sandy," Williams says with pride. "He had the old English lettering 'OG Big Sandy' on the back of his car. [The name] has a family history for me that I'm very, very proud of."

Another point of pride for Williams has been that of his Orange County roots. "There's certain ones of us who claim this area," Williams says, reminiscing about early days playing shows in Gwen Stefani's family's Anaheim back yard and longtime friendship with Dita Von Teese that goes back to when she was Heather Sweet of Irvine. "This is where we came from, and we are very proud of it. Yeah, I mean, we grew up under the specter of the LA thing, but yeah, there is some great damn stuff that came out of this area, you know, and it's still coming out!"

Speaking of great damn stuff still coming out of Orange County, Williams assures us that Big Sandy & His Fly-Rite Boys will continue performing as long as the fans show up—which they do. "Not that I have real serious laurels to rest upon," Williams says, "but I never want to get to that point where I am just like resting on your laurels, like, 'Yeah, I have done all this.' I just wanna keep coming up with new stuff, new songs—keep moving forward.

"To me, it's a nice feeling to know in my heart that the best stuff is still ahead of me," he continues. "Nothing that has happened along the way has ever proved that wrong."

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OC PEOPLE 2018

THE NIGHTLIFE NATURAL

STACY BUTLER KEEPS THE HOUSE OF BLUES RED-HOT

BY NATE JACKSON

Running a venue like the House of Blues in Anaheim requires more than just the skills of a typical general manager. Overseeing one of OC's largest, most iconic venues means you have to be a music junkie, an expert planner and statistician, an innovator, a star wrangler, a night owl, and a people person. All this while maintaining a Blues Brothers level of cool. Above all, you have to be very, very flexible.

It's a stressful job, but Stacy Butler sees this wall of tasks as a welcome challenge. "At the end of the day, it's a people business," she says while pecking at a steak salad. She's seated at a booth inside the venue's colorful, open dining hall, one of four areas that host shows within the 40,000-square-foot building. "Being able to mold yourself in the situation is a must. You also have to stay highly organized when you have four different businesses under one roof; you have to know what's going on in your life three months down the road."

She recently managed to slip in a long-awaited Hawaiian vacation, and her newfound tan is well-earned. When the 34-year-old was promoted to the general manager position in March, it felt like the culmination of a lifetime growing up in the club and venue industry. After graduating from USC and waiting tables at a restaurant-turned-nightclub in Santa Monica, the Seattle native got a shot from upper management at applying for a job in nightlife management. Despite having zero experience, her wealth of ambition landed her the gig. Being thrown into the sink-or-swim environment was insane, she recalls, but she soon got the hang of it. "It was a lot of learning on the fly and learning on my own, which was a little difficult, but sometimes that's the best way to learn."

It wasn't until landing a job in music programming at the Viper Room a couple of years later that she realized her true calling. "I knew [working with bands] is where I belong," Butler says. "Viper Room was what really got me to love seeing concerts every night."

As her musical tastes are all over the map, she is definitely well-suited to run the Anaheim venue, which hosts artists varying from Big Sean to Billy Idol. She admits, however, that anything related to '90s R&B will always be her jam. "I listen to every kind of music, anything that induces an emotion, whether it's pain, or happiness or sadness, good or bad," Butler says. "My playlist is always music ADD."

She started working for Live Nation in 2012 and has since helped to operate or close out multiple House of Blues venues, including the former location at Downtown Disney before working underneath her predecessor, Tim Jorgensen, in the club's new digs at GardenWalk.

Butler recalls the chaos of that first weekend in the new location, coordinating massive crowds for two nights of Social Distortion. "Everything was going on at once," she says. "The building wasn't fully done, and the show would come down, and then workers would come in, and the next day, they'd leave and clean up, and we'd have another show. But the relief of seeing a show go off and being officially open was pretty cool."

Now that things at the venue have taken on a solid rhythm, even the crazy nights and misadventures of life in the business aren't as daunting as they once were. But she always tries to focus on giving fans an experience that will leave their ears ringing and their hearts singing.

"You can see Wu-Tang Clan anywhere, but where can you go where you're getting an amazing experience, dinner before, and an after-party in the Foundation Room?" she asks. "It's our job to create those experiences where people want to come back and talk about us, too."

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THE FRONT MAN OF BEATNIK BANDITO

DAVID VALDEZ'S RECORD STORE IS A SLICE OF OLD CALIFORNIA CULTURE

BY NATE JACKSON

There's something immediately familiar about Beatnik Bandito Music Emporium. On the racks and walls of this record shop are not only clothes, records and guitars, but also the spirit of a different time—an old-school roadhouse around the corner from Santa Ana's rampant revamping of its historical downtown. While most newer businesses rush to slap a brand-new veneer on an existing building, Valdez has spent the past four years creating a time warp into the golden era of Southern California culture.

"When I first opened the store, these kids would come off the street, just *Mexicanos* saying stuff like, 'It's like my grandma's house in here, man, it's so homey,'" Valdez says from his usual perch behind a glass counter filled with old-school buttons, patches and jewelry he's cultivated over the years. "It just cracked me up because it dawned on me that ... this *does* look like my grandmother's house. I guess I've always liked that old-timey aesthetic."

Before establishing the shop, Valdez had been laid off from his longtime job at a cable company. His dream was to use his severance money to open the rock & roll clubhouse of his dreams. Opened in 2014, the record and clothing store is a worldwide destination for music-lovers who peruse the record stacks. Valdez even added a guitar-repair shop in the back office for those needing to get their axes fixed.

But its role as a live music venue at night was perhaps its most unlikely. Despite being no larger than a studio apartment, Beatnik is a go-to place for just about every up-and-coming band in the county. Though he doesn't get as much foot traffic as some of the businesses that are directly on Main Street, Beatnik's location on Broadway allows Valdez to have shows later at night without disturbing his neighbors.

"I've had moshing and crowd-surfing in here—no one's been hurt, fortunately," Valdez says.

Though the Anaheim native's clean-cut Americana rocker look is considered the in thing nowadays, it's nothing new for Valdez, who has been making music with nearly all the pioneers of OC punk and Americana since the '80s. Having toured as a drummer with blues-punk bands such as the Pontiac Brothers and playing guitar with his current bands—Echo Sparks, Abby Girl and the Real Deal—Valdez's roots in roots music are plenty deep. In fact, his first record with the Pontiac Brothers, *Doll Hut*, came out right before Linda Jemison turned the legendary punk roadhouse into what it is today. "Honestly, [Beatnik] was inspired by the Doll Hut: just an old-timey place, a roadhouse from the '20s," Valdez says.

In addition to a wide swath of records and rock & roll artifacts collected from estate sales and swap meets, Valdez displays personal items, each of which has a story he'll be happy to tell you. Behind the counter hangs a guitar with a signed, band-painted cartoon from Kustom Kulture icon Ed "Big Daddy" Roth and a rare cardboard album made by Fender in the '50s that features a recording of his father singing and playing guitar.

"The store is the culmination of those experiences growing up in the culture of Southern California," he says. "It's all reflected here."

NJACKSON@OCWEEKLY.COM

JOJO

BROOKE NIPAR

Friday

ECSTATIC VISION, SASQUATCH, THUNDERGUT 7:30 p.m., $10, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com.

GASOLINA PRESENTS OESPACITO 9 p.m., $15, 18+. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

GBH, ANGELIC UPSTARTS, RAD CO., CRIM PROJECT, CRIM 8 p.m., $22, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com

THE SLOP STOMP, ICKY & THE SPLOOGES, ROOGIES MAMAS 8 p.m., free, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.

Saturday

ANGELIC UPSTARS, RAD CO., THE WIDOWS, CRIM 8 p.m., $16-$18, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com

BLACKTOP MOJO 8 p.m., free, 21+. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-7469, www.slidebarfullerton.com.

CHEAP TISSUE, THE PESOS, TUNNELS 8 p.m., $10, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com.

NO VIOLENCE MUSIC FESTIVAL, WITH OS CATALEPTICOS, INSPECTOR, THE CASUALTIES 2 p.m., $40, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

Sunday

NAWTHORNE NEIGHTS, SIENNA SKIES, NEAVY THINGS, NOTEL ROOKS, LISTENER 7 p.m., $18, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

ON WONDER, ASTRONOMYY 8 p.m., $29.50, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com.

XO, WAR TAPES, REA RITUAL, THE KIO CNOCOLATE BAND 6 p.m., free, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.

Monday

THE JETTIES 8 p.m., free, 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com.

MEMORIAL DAY ROCK'N-ROLL BBQ, FEATURING SURPRISE GUESTS 2 p.m., $10, 21+. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com

Tuesday

JOJO, MALIA CIVETZ 7 p.m., $30, all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583, www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

SRACOUSTIC NIGHT, WITH THE MAXIES 8 p.m., free, 21+. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-7469, www.slidebarfullerton.com

SURNUMANS., FINAL CONFLICT, RATS IN THE WALL 8 p.m., $15, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com

Wednesday

KING GIZZARD & THE LIZARD WIZARD, AMYL AND THE SNIFFERS 8 p.m., $25, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com

Thursday, May 31

FOR PEACE BAND, ITAL VIBES 8 p.m., free, 21+. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-7469, www.slidebarfullerton.com

GITANE DEMONE QUARTET, TERMINAL A, SNARK TOYS, ACUTE 8 p.m., $7. Alex's Bar, 2913 E. Anaheim St., Long Beach, (562) 434-8292, www.alexsbar.com.

TAYLOR CRAWFORD, ANNIE MCQUEEN, STEVIETALKS 7:30, $5, all ages. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com.

TORY LANEZ, DAVO, FLIPP DINERO 8 p.m., $30, all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600, www.observatoryoc.com

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Pissy

I like watersports, and I heard about a guy in a rural area who holds piss parties in his back yard. I found a mailing list for those interested in piss play, and it wasn't long before he posted about one of these parties. People on the list talk a big game, but no one else has stepped up to host something, including me. (I would, but four neighbors back into my back yard.) The host has very simple rules for who can attend: You have to identify as a guy and wear masculine attire. I got to the party, and there were about four guys and the host. I had a good time. The host had plenty of drinks out, towels, chairs, canopies, and candles to ward off the mosquitos. I've been back a couple of times. Everyone is friendly enough, and there's the right amount of perversion. So what's the problem? The host. He's loud and annoying. He insists on putting classical music on (it doesn't set the mood very well). He tells the same lame jokes every time he's pissing on someone. He will complain that people say they're coming and don't show. If you are having a moment with someone, he will invariably hover in on the action. Without having read, I've tried to make it clear that we are not looking for company, but he doesn't take the hint. It's his party, and props to him for hosting it—but it takes the fun out of it when the host doesn't know when to back off. I've gotten to the point where it's not worth the effort to go. Do I just get over it, or say something privately?

Person Exasperates Enthusiast

The advice I gave a different reader about dealing with a guest horning in on the action at an orgy applies in your case: "Even kind and decent people can be terrible about taking hints—especially when doing so means getting cut out of a drunken fuckfest. So don't hint, tell. There's no rule of etiquette that can paper over the discomfort and awkwardness of that moment, so you'll just have to power through it."

Swap out "drunken fuckfest" for "drenchin' piss scene," and the advice works—up to a point, PEE, because the person in your case who needs telling, not hinting, isn't one of the guests, he's the host. (And he sounds like a gracious host. I mean, drinks, towels, and canapes* at a piss party? Swank.) But your host's behavior sounds genuinely annoying. Hosting a sex party doesn't give someone the right to insert himself into someone else's scene, and stupid jokes have the power to kill the mood and murder the boners.

So what do you do?

Well, you could send your host an email or give him a call. Thank him for the invite, let him know you appreciate the effort he goes to (such delicious canapes!), and then tell him why some people say they're coming and don't show: You're too loud, your music is awful, you have a bad habit of horning in on the action, and you need to learn some new jokes to tell when you're pissing on someone (or, better yet, not tell any jokes at all). But I don't think ticking off a list of his shortcomings is going to get you anywhere other than crossed off the invite list to future parties.

So why not make your own piss party? You don't need a big back yard—I mean, presumably your place has a tub. Supplement your tub with a couple of kiddie pools on top of some plastic tarp laid down on the living room or basement floor. Ask your guests to keep it in the tub, pool or on the tarp. You get to choose the guys, you get to select the music, and as host, you can lay down the law about making jokes and horning in on the action. Both are forbidden, and joke-telling horner-inners will be asked to pull up their pants and leave.

One last thought: If you have it in you to invest some time in getting to know this guy—if you treat him like a human being—you might be able to draw him out on something that clearly frustrates him. guys who say they're coming to the party but don't show. If he seems genuinely baffled, PEE, that's your opening to ask if he'd like some constructive feedback. If he says yes, you can very gently run through your list of ways to improve his parties: no jokes, better music, and a "no horning in" rule for all (not just for him).

* Yes, I know: There were *canopies* at the party, not *canapes*—tents, not hors d'oeuvres. But I read it as canapes at first, and the mental image of piss players daintily eating canapes between scenes was so much more entertaining than the mental image of piss players huddling under canopies that I stuck with my original reading.

SavageLove

» DAN SAVAGE

I had a MMF threesome with my husband and a man we met on Instagram (of all places)! Everyone had a good time, and there was no awkwardness afterward. I think things went so well because after years of reading Savage Love, we knew to "use our words" and treat our "very special guest star" with respect! Thanks, Dan!

My Ultimate Fantasy Fulfilled

You're welcome, MUFF!

I'm a cis woman and recently came out as a lesbian after identifying as bisexual for three years. After having sexual encounters with men and women, I finally admitted to myself that I am gay. Now that I'm finally out, I don't want to do anything that would make me feel like denying it again. My question is, am I a bad lesbian if I sleep with a guy? I'm currently working 50 hours a week and going to school. I don't have time for a relationship, and finding casual hookups with women is difficult. A male friend I know and trust recently propositioned me. At first I said no, but now I'm rethinking it. Sex with men doesn't compare at all to sex with women for me. On a scale of 1 to 10, it's definitely in the below-5 range. But my mind says, "It's still sex!" and I would enjoy it to a point. But I worry that doing this would call my sexuality into question. I feel like I'd definitely have to hide this from my friends. And if I feel guilty enough to hate it, maybe I shouldn't do it? Finally identifying as a lesbian was like breathing out for me. I feel way more like myself and am way happier now. But I worry that even being willing to consider this makes me seem bi. I guess I'm looking for permission and absolution. Would this make me a "bad" lesbian? Or would it mean I should identify as bi?

Girl Asking You

I've often been accused of having a pro-dick-sitting bias. GAY so I decided to recuse myself and pass your question on to a couple of lesbians. "She is way too concerned with labels," said Lesbian No. 1. "I used to slip on a dick once every few years—before I quit drinking tequila—and that didn't make me any less of a raging, homo-romantic dyke. And if her friends give that much of a fuck about who she bones, she needs friends with more interesting hobbies."

"I don't think there is anything wrong with her or any lesbian wanting to sleep with a guy," said Lesbian No. 2. "I wouldn't sleep with a guy, but I do agree that women trying to casually hook up with other women is much more difficult than men with men or even men with women. Women instantly want to be your long-term partner after one hookup—the U-Haul jokes are fucking real. But if identifying as something is important to her, I think identifying as queer might be a better option for now rather than struggling to figure out if she is only bi or only lesbian and only those forever."

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» MARY CARREON

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My most recent round of monthly cramps felt as if Ronda Rousey slammed me with an upper cut to the gut. I was curled over in fetal position, nauseated and sweating. I wasn't patient enough to wait an hour or [illegible] just thinking about the taste of weed tincture wasn't doing me any good. But then I remembered I had a Papa & Barkley Releaf Patch. About 20 minutes after placing the 1:1-ratio patch on my abdomen, I began to feel normal again. Made with equal parts THC and CBD, it didn't leave me feeling too high. I was still very functional, although I wasn't clear-headed.

The cannabinoids enter your bloodstream through the skin. Papa & Barkley use time-release technology to ensure the medicine is evenly distributed for maximum pain relief. After about six hours, the effects of the patch faded—and so did my cramps.

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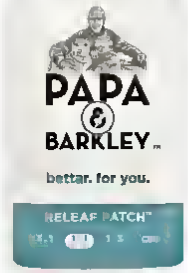

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Learn more about his relationship with cannabis:

What role does cannabis play in your life?
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What does cannabis enable you to do?
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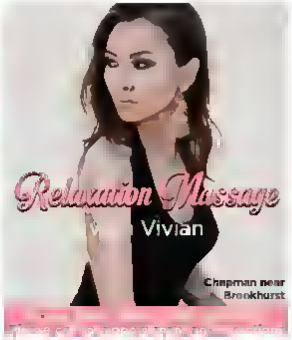
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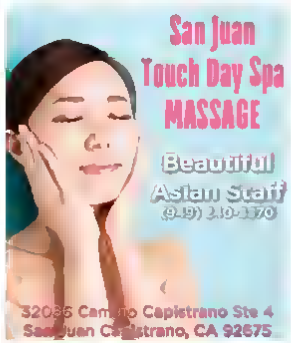
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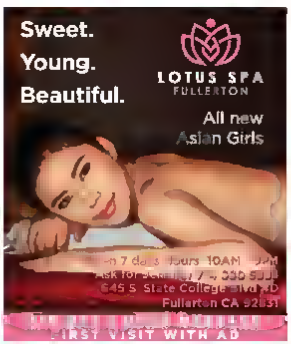
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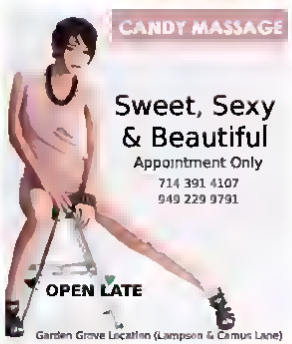
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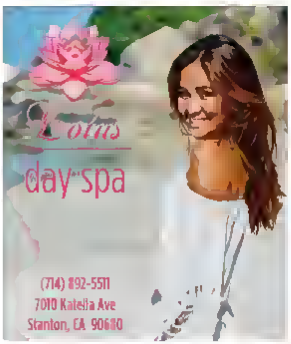

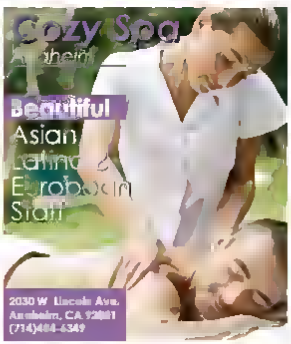

OC PEOPLE 2018

THE PORTRAIT ARTIST

PHOTOGRAPHY HAS TAKEN JOHN GILHOOLEY PLACES

BY NICK SCHOU

With more than 100 cover photographs to his name, John Gilhooley is easily the most prolific and recognizable photographer whose work has graced the pages of *OC Weekly* during the past two decades. Born in LA and raised in Glendale before moving to Huntington Beach in 1988, Gilhooley's career has taken him to the heights of the profession—scoping locations for Annie Leibovitz one day, then flying down to Baja with Brad Pitt the next. For this infernal rag, he's taken photographs of everyone from punk-rock icon Jack Grisham and neo-ska/pop queen Gwen Stefani to best-selling crime-fiction author Don Winslow and Ducks hall-of-famer Teemu Selänne.

So taking portraits of famous people isn't exactly intimidating to Gilhooley. What surprised him, however, was how much effort it took to capture his own portrait. "I can shoot 100 people, but when it came to me, I had no idea what to do," he says, laughing. "I put it off, thinking I'd get a great idea." After considering various posed shots that would show him in the act of photographing someone else, Gilhooley finally realized this was actually the perfect opportunity to take his own self-portrait, something that had never occurred to him to do. "Taking a photo of myself was way harder than I had thought," he adds. "After 80 frames, I still wasn't done, but finally I had to stop. I mean, am I really that self-absorbed?"

As a junior-high-school kid in the LA area during the late 1970s, Gilhooley took up darkroom photography just as he was getting into punk rock, surfing and skateboarding. He remembers his first two cameras: a Pentax K1000 and a Canon AT-1. He began taking his camera to different skateboard contests, and in eighth grade, he entered into a citywide contest a shot he took of a skater who had gone airborne off the side of a swimming pool and inverted himself. The maneuver gave Gilhooley the perfect opportunity to capture the skater upside-down in the air. He won the contest.

"That went to my head, and I told everyone I was going to be a professional photographer," Gilhooley recalls. "In reality, all I won was a certificate or savings bond where you can't get the money until you are 18. But in my mind, I was a paid photographer."

After high school, Gilhooley attended Glendale College for a year and a half. His elderly teacher wasn't particularly impressed by Gilhooley's penchant for intentionally scratching his negatives in an attempt to mimic the new wave graphic-art style of the early '80s. "I was a punk-rock kid, a surfer," he explains. "I wasn't interested in getting everything perfect. I thought a scratch on my negative made it art."

At loggerheads with his mentor—who had graduated from art school before color photography existed—Gilhooley transferred to Los Angeles Trade Technical School. Although he never graduated, he quickly hooked up with a group of commerical photographers who had a studio downtown and began working for them in 1986.

By 1990, Gilhooley was scouting photoshoot locations with a Polaroid camera for famed photographer Leibovitz. He spent the next three years on her team. "She would come out west to shoot a celebrity, and so I'd take the Polaroid all over to different locations, from the high desert and dry lake beds to Venice Beach, and they'd pick locations, and then take a celebrity there, and she'd take the photo," he recounts. "She wasn't easy to work for, but my work wouldn't be what it is today without her."

For another three years following that stint, Gilhooley worked for *Rolling Stone* photographer Mark Seliger, helping to arrange shots of Sean Penn on an LA rooftop and Brad Pitt in Mexico, his memories are a blur of an endless rotation of hangouts with movie stars and rock & roll legends. After shifting into the more steady work of commercial, especially automotive, photography in the early 2000s, Gilhooley stumbled into what would become a long-running freelance career with the *OC Weekly*.

In 2004, after submitting a few photographs to the *Weekly*'s then-photo editor Tenaya Hills, she sent him on a last-minute mission to shoot a crime scene in Rancho Santa Margarita. A week later, the paper sent Gilhooley up to LA to take a photo of the Adolescents, who had just re-formed as a band. The results became his first *Weekly* cover. "I've lost count now, but it's more than 120 covers," he says. "Shooting portraits is the most amazing work."

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